

# ASIA LOCAL PAGES

ASIA AREA PRESIDENCY MESSAGE

## Serving Others With Love

Elder Yoke Sang Freddie Chan Of the Seventy

In Sept 1972 when I was 17 years old, I was enlisted to the Royal Malaysian Air Force. At that time, I did not fully comprehend its impact on my life as I had to sign a 13 year contract with them. My duty was to serve and protect my country from enemies in times of war.

In order to train us to become a soldier, we had to undergo physical and mental training to toughen up our bodies and minds to be physically and mentally fit. We were trained to listen and obey commands and carry them out efficiently. We developed a strict discipline into our daily lives as every second was counted in carrying out our assignments. I was glad that being trained and being physically and mentally fit was a strong foundation in my military life.

As I reflect back on my Air force days, I know that Heavenly Father has prepared me to receive His Gospel for I did join the church when I was in the Air Force. My 13 years in the Air Force provided me with the opportunity to learn and to serve. Therefore, service was part and parcel in my everyday life. When I joined the Church back in 1980, I was prepared to serve God in whatever way that I could be

of service to Him. I learn that in giving service to others, we can approach it in 2 ways. One is service with a sense of fulfilling it as a duty and obligation and the other is service with humility and love.

The greatest example in serving with love is our Master and our Savior Jesus Christ. In his earthly ministry, He showed by example how one should serve others in their need. He would listen and give counsel to those that reached out to Him. He would seek out the poor and needy and gave them the blessings they required. During the Last Supper with his apostles, He said, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."<sup>1</sup>

As we learn from His example, we too can do likewise. My 13 years of service in the Air Force has instilled in me the discipline to carry out duties effectively but with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, it has taught me to serve others with humility and with love.

I am very grateful to my mother who throughout her life has always been of service to others. She taught me the

principle of work as she took over most of the burden of providing food and shelter for our family. She earned money by doing odd jobs like washing clothes for families and doing errands for others. I have felt the hardness of the palm of her hands from washing clothes and felt the love she has for us. She was willing to sacrifice her life in working so that my brothers and I would have the opportunity to complete our education in school. If any of her friends needed her help, she was always there to lend a helping hand. Her fine example has given me a strong foundation to serve others whenever possible.

Pride is the stumbling block that will hamper our service to others. To serve with love requires one to have compassion, empathy, understanding and willing to take action to help. The Prophet Joseph said "that a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation."<sup>2</sup>

My youngest son Brandon submitted his missionary application before he turned 19 to serve a mission and his application was rejected because he



**Elder Yoke Sang  
Freddie Chan**

was overweight. His application would be reconsidered again after he loses 20 kilos. I had to break this news to him and he was dumbfounded for a moment. I then asked if he still had a desire to go serve a mission and he said he had. I told him that he would have to go for a weight loss program to shed off those extra kilos from his body. I enrolled him into a fitness center and engaged a personal trainer for him. Within a few months, he was able to come down to the weight that would allow him to go serve his mission.

He was willing to sacrifice and work hard to qualify himself to serve God as found in Section 4 of the Doctrine and Covenants, “Therefore, O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind and strength, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day. Therefore, if ye have desires to serve God ye are called to the work . . . And faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God, qualify him for the work.”<sup>3</sup>

Elder Chan is currently serving in the Singapore Mission and I always look forward to receive his weekly email. I can see the change in him as he seeks to build the kingdom of God here. In one of his emails, he bore his testimony, “There is no greater love than serving the people . . . and serving the Lord . . . and it is

a great lesson that I have learnt in my mission. I start to learn so much more . . . and starting to realize the joy . . . and also the pains in doing missionary work . . . I have come to really understand more of the Atonement now and also realizing how important it is when it is being applied. I am grateful to be shoulder to shoulder with my Savior and to have Him (the perfect missionary) leading and guiding me.”

The joy of serving others with love brings about a strengthening of faith and testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I am grateful for the many opportunities I have in serving in various callings in the church and they have brought me closer to the Lord and be a humble servant.

With every opportunity to be of service to others, we have the privilege of following our Savior’s footsteps in ministering to others. Let us always have room in our hearts as we are called upon to help establish the kingdom of God here on earth.

I bear you my testimony that I know that Heavenly Father lives and Jesus Christ is our Savior and Redeemer. Because of His great love for us, He was willing to sacrifice His Son to atone for our sins. Jesus Christ is the head of the Church and President Monson is our living prophet today. We have the Book of Mormon as the word of God and another testament of Jesus Christ. His kingdom

will continue to roll forth into all corners of the earth, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. John 13:34–35.
2. *Lectures on Faith*, comp. N. B. Lundwall (1999), 58.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 4:2–3 & 5.

#### LOCAL NEWS

## Whitefield Open House Delights Community

Samson Putturaj, Public Affairs-Media

Bright smiles and warm hearts welcomed guests to The Indian Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Open House for the new Whitefield Branch. Even the monsoon thunder showers couldn’t dampen the excitement as members welcomed the surrounding community to view their new place of worship. As they toured the building, visitors felt the warm and inviting spirit of Jesus Christ. Many commented on the peaceful feeling they experienced as they walked through the wonderful new facility.



*The Whitefield Branch meetinghouse.*



**Relief Society sisters welcome guests.**

This newly completed beautiful building is nestled in the midst of global technology companies, world hospitals, and renowned education facilities, convention centers and upscale apartments. Amidst all these wonderful surroundings, the Church has not only opened its doors to the community for the open house, but all visitors are welcome anytime. Its peaceful, calming presence is a much welcomed addition to this business center of activity in White Field.

As members escorted guests through the various rooms in the building used for worship and classes, many made positive comments. Ravish, age 20, a visitor commented, "It's awesome! I experienced a peaceful feeling". Nikita, age 19, said, "This is the first time I have come to this Church. It is nice



**The chapel where worship services are held.**

to see women are encouraged here. I can refresh myself every week coming here". Finally, Suresh, age 35, commented, "Coming from a non-Christian background, this visit helped me to understand the significant contribution of Jesus Christ to mankind."

The new Whitefield Road Branch is located on the main road to Whitefield. Legend has it when the British settled in this locality they saw great fields of beautiful white flowers. They accordingly named the place Whitefield. The flowers may be gone but this beautiful white building stands just as impressive to those who first cast their eyes on it. It is a monument to peace, worship, and to the life changing teachings of Jesus Christ. ■

## LDS Church enhances web pages on its history, doctrine

By Tad Walch, Deseret News

The LDS Church has updated and enhanced several pages on its website dealing with a wide range of gospel topics, including some of the more delicate issues of church history.

The improvements are part of a larger, long-term effort to help families improve personal and family gospel study, church leaders said.

The improved "Gospel Topics" pages are found under the "Teachings" tab at the top of LDS.org. The enhanced page on "Race and the Priesthood" was posted last week, following publication of "First

Vision Accounts" and "Are Mormons Christian?"

The improved pages are intended to use scholarship, historical perspectives and outside resources transparently to help parents answer questions children might come across online, church leaders said.

The use of outside resources is a first.

"For the first time, we're linking away from LDS.org resources," said Elder Paul B. Pieper, executive director of the Priesthood Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. "That's new. We've never permitted anyone on LDS.org to

link to sites off LDS.org. If you look at the bottom of these pages, you'll see we link to the BYU scripture citation index and the Encyclopedia of Mormonism, for example."

"It's really a new day for LDS.org," he added.

Church members are cheering the enhanced pages, especially the one on race and the priesthood, which plainly "disavows" theories some critics have claimed were church doctrine and the basis for a ban on blacks holding the priesthood, a ban lifted by revelation in 1978.

"It's extremely valuable," said Roger Nicholson, a church member in Union City, Calif. "Now we can point directly to LDS.org and show people we don't teach that."

### **Study and faith**

The topics pages are a piece of the major effort to enhance the church's curriculum with new digital tools and an improved website. Those initiatives began last year with the launch of a new youth curriculum program that pushed study and lesson planning for teenage Mormons to LDS.org and its new interactive learning and teaching tools.

The process of creating the new youth curriculum, combined with the overall digital revolution, led some church leaders and staff to consider how LDS.org could be used to design all church instruction for the home and families first, with Sunday instruction as a supplement, Elder Pieper said.

"This shifted our thinking completely," he added, "and we've been working on that for a year."

The changes will continue for another couple of years with similar enhancements to curriculum for adults and children, as well as continued improvements to LDS.org.

Improvements to the Gospel Topics section are also critical as the church grows, Elder Pieper said.

"It really comes from looking at a worldwide church and saying, 'What do we do when we have 20 million members or 50 million members? We've got to have a simple core we can build around.

When we take the gospel into a new country, we take a copy of 'Gospel Principles' and the scriptures. Now we can take the scriptures and Gospel Topics.

"For decades, church leaders have emphasized better teaching, Elder Pieper said. The overarching goal of the improvements to LDS.org is an emerging new emphasis to help church members, wherever they may be, become better learners. Each of the three enriched Gospel Topic pages includes multiple resources down the right side of the page, but the first resource in each case is a link to a page titled "Seek learning, even by study and also by faith," a phrase from LDS scripture. That page says the desire to ask questions comes from God and should involve reason.

"In our search for truth, we read, ponder and analyze information and weigh its reliability," the page says.

"We have to ask ourselves hard questions when we seek learning by study," Elder Pieper said. "What are the assumptions? What are the intents? How accurate is this? Is it good scholarship? Isn't it? How does it fit with my faith experience? How does it fit with other things? There are a lot of things you have to question about that, and I think most people with the Internet take something at face value and don't search a lot beyond."

Learning by faith comes via scripture and prayer, Elder Pieper said. "The ultimate source of all truth and of all context and of all understanding is the Lord."

### **Hot topics**

As the church's Communications Services Committee considered the implications of the augmented youth curriculum and upgraded the search capabilities and home page at LDS.org, Elder Pieper said questions arose about where it should provide information on the hottest online topics about the church.

Those hot topics sometimes become "sensationalized" attacks on the church's doctrine or history,

said Church Historian Steven E. Snow. He said church leaders wanted to help members study those topics and provide them with the best information available.

“The young people, particularly, they’ll get on one site, and they’ll say, ‘Well, I didn’t ever hear that,’” Elder Snow said. “And then that’ll lead them to another. And they just keep going. And then there’s this credibility issue that begins about, ‘What else is the church hiding?’ Well, we’re not hiding anything. . . . I think in this day and age it’s become apparent that we really do need to provide a series of answers that will help our members better understand these chapters of our history.”

That effort dovetailed with the decision to make the Gospel Topics section of LDS.org a focus of church study.

“With what we’re facing, it’s important that we all learn how to learn, as well as how to teach,” Elder Pieper said. “So what this is designed to do is to be a resource that anyone can come on and learn the gospel and strengthen their testimony and deepen their conversion. That’s really what Gospel Topics is for. It’s a learning site, not a teaching site.”

“It’s about teaching in the home and resources for parents,” he added, “and by the way, here are resources for questions parents may get.”

## **Race and priesthood**

Those questions may include the church’s position on blacks and the priesthood prior to 1978, when then-church President Spencer W. Kimball received a revelation lifting the ban.

The race and the priesthood topic page says the church’s doctrine is that God loves everyone equally and makes salvation available to all. It also states that the church’s structure and organization encourages racial integration.

“The church was established in 1830, during an era of great racial division in the United States,” the page says. Church founder Joseph Smith openly opposed slavery and allowed the ordination of a

few black men, one of whom participated in temple ceremonies.

In 1852, President Smith’s successor, President Brigham Young, “publicly announced that men of black African descent could no longer be ordained to the priesthood. . . .” He also said that year that in the future black church members would “have (all) the privilege and more” enjoyed by other members.

“We’ve really tried to understand our history and why that policy occurred,” Elder Snow said, “and what led up to the revelation of President Kimball in 1978.”

That effort included increased attention from historians.

“We’ve enlisted the aid of historians, church historians, scholars, church leaders as well as others to work carefully on these matters to make certain we have the facts as right as we know them today,” Elder Snow said, “and then to help our members understand them in the context of the time in our history and the time in American history, what was going on in the world at the time.

“It’s been a very interesting few months of research and scholarly pursuit as we’ve been able to clearly research some of these issues and chapters.”

The race and the priesthood page includes videos of black church members talking about their perspectives.

“It’s one of those things you remember where you were and how you felt and what you did next,” Darius Gray said in one video about the 1978 priesthood revelation. “It was a remarkable moment. The world had changed in ways that many don’t even recognize.”

## **Other topics**

Roger Nicholson is a Mormon with relatives who left the church after being affected by materials they found on the Internet. A software quality assurance manager with a Silicon Valley firm by day, Nicholson helps produce content on the side

for FairMormon.org, which counters Internet questions about the church with scholarly answers.

Nicholson has spent years searching lds.org for information provided about some of these topics by church leaders and historians in talks and church publications.

“On the First Vision, the church has had something on the website for years,” Nicholson said. “They replaced it with ‘First Vision Accounts,’ which is much better, but all the information has been in ‘The Ensign’ (a church magazine) and even its predecessor, ‘The Improvement Era,’ before. But when it’s talked about once in a 10– or 20–year period, it’s hard to know or find easily.”

“Gathering the best information in easy-to-find topic pages on LDS.org is the missing piece in the gap between all the church has provided through the years and finding it easily.”

Joseph Smith recorded that God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to him in 1820 in four handwritten accounts, in 1832, 1835, 1838 and 1842. The First Vision accounts page provides direct links to the handwritten accounts at the Joseph Smith Papers Project website.

“I don’t see how you could make it any easier to access this information,” Nicholson said.

That is the idea, Elder Pieper and Elder Snow said.

“We’re not trying to cover anything,” Elder Pieper said, “we’re trying to open up the fullest possibility of everything for people to get in and get their arms around it, but do it with their faith there.”

The church’s First Presidency approves each of the enhanced topic pages.

“The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve both have been very supportive of this process,” Elder Snow said. “I think they sense the need to provide accurate information to our members to counter a lot of sensationalism that tends to come about online or on the Internet over some of these historical topics.”

“We want them to be able to go to a place where they can read accurate information and

be able to seek to understand those historical chapters in the context of time and place and understand these answers have been approved by the presiding Brethren of the church. I think that will give many of our members confidence that they can rely on those answers.”

Nicholson said he will enjoy watching the project unfold.

“I’m really looking forward to whatever else is coming on Gospel Topics.”

Elder Snow said one of the next topic pages to be enhanced will be about the translation of the Book of Mormon.

## Digital church

Church leaders are encouraging members to use digital gospel tools where possible. That reduces the costs of printing manuals for the church as well as the need for members to purchase scriptures.

The church published a new set of scriptures this year, updating chapter and section headings, among other things. Those updates were made automatically to apps on phones and tablets, and the church told members not to buy new printed scriptures just because of the updates.

“I was in a high council meeting on Thursday,” Nicholson said, “and the stake president looked up and realized everyone was on a phone or a tablet. There was not a single paper copy of the scriptures in the room.”

Elder Pieper said he uses church apps like Gospel Library as he rides the train to work in downtown Salt Lake City each day, but he said many members will need help familiarizing themselves with all the new digital tools on the church’s website and apps.

“Part of what we’ll do with the new adult curriculum in priesthood and Relief Society is we’ll teach more about how to use these tools,” he said. “You’ll be taught on Sundays about how to do some of this.” ■

# I Know He Lives

By Elder Bangari

India, New Delhi Mission

**A**t the age of seventeen, I happened to meet two young men who, although close to the same age as me, seemed so very different. They radiated something special; they were diligent, cheerful and filled with love and light. I was deeply impressed and felt drawn to them. As I inquired, they told me their names were Elder Holst and Elder Muthabathula and that they were missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We arranged a time when we could meet and over several weeks they taught me about the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, the plan of salvation and the Book of Mormon. Everything they said was new and exciting and yet seemed very familiar, even though I had never heard it before. I remember feeling that it all made sense and seemed very right.

When they introduced the Book of Mormon to me, I told them I would read it and pray to know if it was true. I will never forget the experience of receiving my witness of the Book of Mormon as promised in Moroni 10:4:

“And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of

Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.”

After reading one night I closed the book and knelt in my small room and implored with Heavenly Father to know if it was true. To my surprise, the confirmation of the Holy Ghost came upon me just as promised. My heart was filled with a deep joy and peace that I had never felt before in any Hindu temple; this feeling was different. That night, I knew that God heard my prayer and through the power of the Holy Ghost I learned that God the Father and His Son are real and did appear to the Prophet Joseph Smith. It was at that moment that I decided to be baptized and become a member of Christ’s Church.

Following my baptism I felt that my sins had been forgiven and that I was approved by my Heavenly Father. Most of all, however, I knew that He loved me. His love for me has shown me how to love my fellow man. I live by what the Prophet Joseph Smith taught,

“A man filled with the love of God, is not content with loving his family alone but ranges through the whole world anxious to bless the whole human race.”

This love and knowing the great worth of souls in the eyes of God made me excited to go

with the missionaries to teach the restored gospel to investigators. That experience changed my life completely. I decided to serve a full time mission out of gratitude to my Heavenly Father for bringing the gospel to me. When my mission call came it was to serve in the India, New Delhi Mission teaching fellow Indians the principles that have changed my life. Each and every day I feel the Lord’s love and mercy as I do His work and each and every day my testimony becomes stronger and stronger.

We are all in the process of becoming something. I have chosen, and I would encourage all young men and women to choose, to become like the Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel and the teachings found in the Book of Mormon together with my mission have helped me to be on the path of becoming like Him. There is perhaps no better way of expressing thanks and gratitude to Almighty God than to follow His teachings and to serve a full time mission. Of myself, I know that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ and that the atonement is real. ■



**Elder Bangari**

# A Life-Changing Gift

By Elder and Sister Black

India, New Delhi Mission

On the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, December 3, 2013 a life changing event occurred in a city called Butwal. Situated high in the mountainous region of southern Nepal it is the place where dozens of wheelchairs were donated by LDS Charities with the help of the National Rehabilitation Society for the Disabled. Gathered at a field where the wheelchairs were to be distributed were disabled Nepalese of all ages. They ranged from children as young as five years of age to seniors in their eighties. They were here not only to receive a wheelchair but to have it custom fitted to their

individual body and disability by expert volunteer technicians.

Among the recipients was Sandip Pun, a seven year old boy who had never attended school because he was rejected due to his disability and lack of means to move around. After receiving his new wheelchair, Sandip brimmed with excitement as he will now be permitted to join the other children and students and get his education.

Dharmendar Mallah, is a eighteen year old young man who has not been able to learn a trade because of his immobility. He said, "This wheelchair will make it possible to go to school and get a job. I am so happy. I feel like my whole life is going to change."

Many of the recipients have never had a wheelchair before

but now realize that a whole new world of opportunities will open up for them. A local blind school bussed in students to help celebrate the occasion and dignitaries from Butwal awarded scholarships to wheelchair recipients who can now further their education and careers. Over three hundred people attended the distribution and closing ceremony. This same scenario was repeated several days later in the mountain village of Kawasoti. The disabled were fitted for and received wheelchairs donated by LDS Charities. Lives were changed; hope restored and broad smiles were the expression of the day. Bajinath Chandhary was one of three newly elected members of Parliament that attended and remarked how moved he was by the caring and generosity of LDS Charities and the Church. The other two members of Parliament attending were Jeevan Shrestha and Krishna Pavdel who expressed similar feelings.

In 2013 LDS Charities has donated almost one thousand wheelchairs to the people of Nepal. Elder and Sister Mendenhall, a Humanitarian couple in Kathmandu from Utah and Rakesh Hamal were instrumental in the success of wheelchair projects in Nepal. Their efforts have resulted in the relief of many Nepalese from the pains and suffering experienced with immobility. ■

